**Child Safe Complaint Handling Policy and Processes**

**Date Adopted:** 15 May 2025
**Next Review:** 15 May 2027

**Purpose:**

The BFNL is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all children and young people. This policy ensures that any concern, complaint, or allegation relating to child safety is handled respectfully, promptly, and in accordance with legal obligations.

**Scope**

This policy applies to:

* Children and young people
* Parents, guardians, and carers
* BFNL staff, BFNL Board members, coaches, officials, volunteers, and club members
* All affiliated clubs under the BFNL

**Policy Statement**

We believe children should feel safe and supported to speak up. Complaints are welcomed, taken seriously, and responded to promptly, confidentially, and without fear of punishment or retaliation.

**Definitions**

* **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction or concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child.
* **Child safety concern:** Any issue where a child feels unsafe, including abuse, neglect, bullying, or inappropriate behaviour.
* **Complainant:** The person making the complaint (child, parent, or adult).

**Making a Complaint**

A child safety concern or complaint can be made by:

* Speaking to the **BFNL Child Safety Officer**
* Filling out the **Child Safety Incident Reporting Form**
* Emailing or calling a trusted adult in the club

**Contact:**

**BFNL Child Safety Officer**
Name: Gemma Murphy
Email: gemma@bfnl.com.au
Phone: 0401 152 906

**Complaint Handling Principles**

* **Child-focused:** The needs and views of the child are the priority.
* **Accessible:** Clear, child-friendly pathways to raise concerns.
* **Respectful:** All concerns are treated seriously and respectfully.
* **Confidential:** Only those who need to know are informed.
* **Timely:** Action is taken promptly in line with legal requirements.
* **Impartial:** All parties are treated fairly.

**Complaint Process Overview**

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| Step | Action |
| 1. Receive | Complaint received verbally, in writing, or via form. Immediate support offered. |
| 2. Assess | Is there a safety risk or mandatory reporting obligation? If yes, contact authorities. |
| 3. Respond | Investigate internally where appropriate. Keep child and complainant informed. |
| 4. Record | All actions and outcomes documented using BFNL reporting templates. |
| 5. Resolve | Provide outcome, including support/referral. Review processes if needed. |

**Reporting to Authorities**

If a complaint involves potential abuse, harm, or criminal behaviour, BFNL must notify:

* **Victoria Police** – 000 (if child is in immediate danger)
* **Child Protection (DFFH)** – 1300 664 977
* **Commission for Children and Young People** – if required

BFNL personnel are guided by mandatory reporting laws.

**Support for Children & Families**

Children involved in a complaint will receive:

* Emotional support from trusted adults
* Access to external services if required
* Ongoing communication about outcomes and actions taken

**Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

All complaints are handled confidentially. Records are securely stored for a minimum of 7 years and only accessed by authorised personnel.

**Protection from Retaliation**

Anyone who raises a complaint in good faith is protected from punishment or retaliation. Victimisation of any person making a report is strictly prohibited.

**Training & Communication**

* All BFNL staff and club representatives are trained in this policy.
* Child-friendly complaint posters and flyers are displayed at all clubs.
* The policy is available on the BFNL website and in clubrooms.

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed:

* Every two years, or earlier if needed.
* Following any significant child safety incident.
* In response to changes in legislation or best practices